



## Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment

### What to do in a Chemical Emergency

In the event of a chemical emergency you will hear from local police and first responders through the **Emergency Alert System**. You will be advised if you need to evacuate your area or shelter-in-place.

#### **Evacuation**

Local officials may decide it is dangerous to stay where you are after a chemical release. If your home, school, place of business, or recreational area is being evacuated, act quickly and follow the instructions of local emergency personnel.

##### *Important Reminders:*

- Have a portable emergency kit with extra medication, eyeglasses, and sturdy shoes.
- Identify a location outside your neighborhood where your family can meet.
- Call a friend or relative in another state to give your location and to say you are safe. Local phone lines may be busy, so plan ahead to have an out-of-state contact.

Emergency coordinators will let you know when it is safe to re-enter your neighborhood or workplace.

#### **Sheltering in Place**

When there is concern about a potential exposure to a chemical or other airborne hazard, emergency personnel may advise you to "shelter-in-place." If it is a safer option than evacuating, local officials will suggest that you shelter-in-place.

##### *Things to Do:*

1. Close and lock all windows and exterior doors.
2. Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning.
3. Close the fireplace damper.
4. Go to an interior room without windows. A higher location is preferred because some chemicals are heavier than air and may leak into basements or lower levels even when the windows are closed.
5. Use duct tape to seal around doors and vents into the room.
6. Listen to your radio or television for further instructions.

For questions regarding OEHHA's Emergency Response Program please contact Shelley DuTeaux at [sduteaux@oehha.ca.gov](mailto:sduteaux@oehha.ca.gov). For general questions, please call the All OEHHA line at (510) 622-3200.

OEHHA is one of six agencies under the umbrella of the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA).